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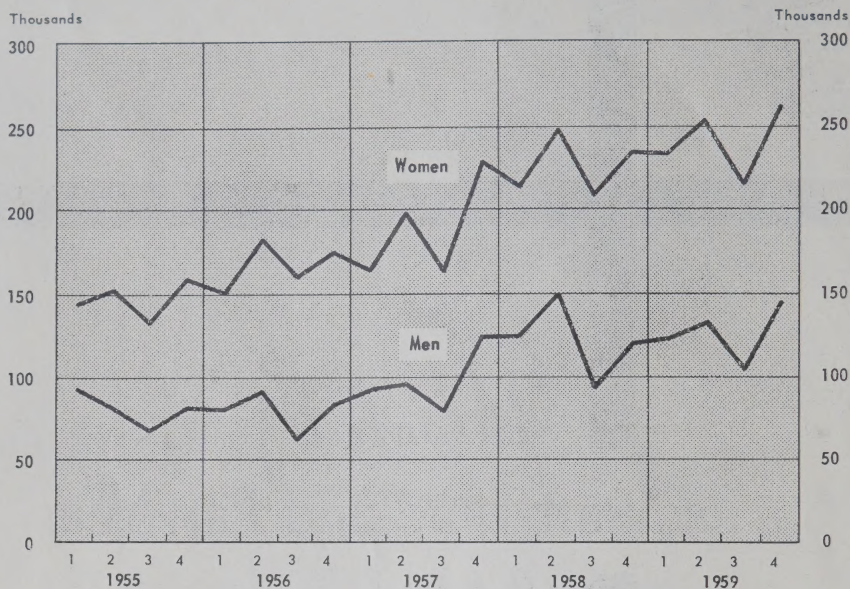
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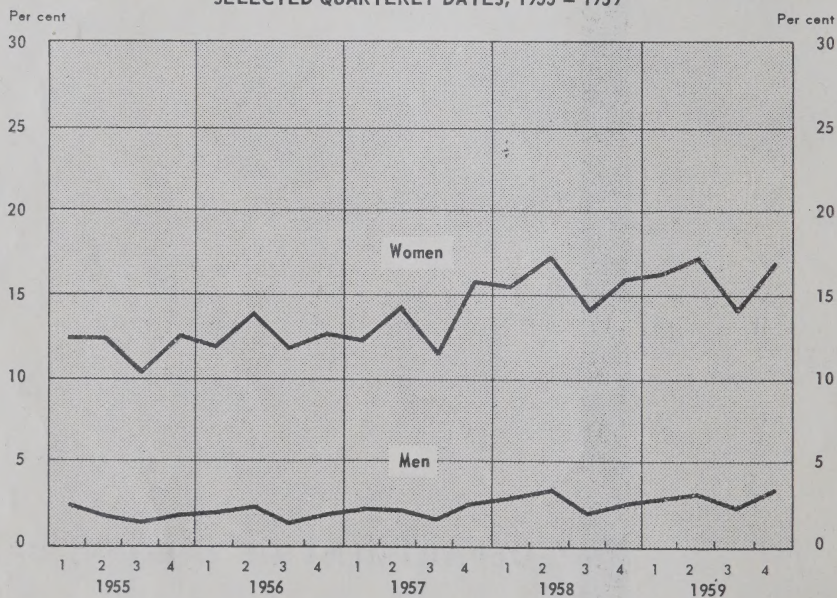
Women as Part-Time and Part-Year *Workers*

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR, CANADA

NUMBER OF REGULAR PART-TIME WORKERS BY SEX, CANADA
SELECTED QUARTERLY DATES, 1955 - 1959



REGULAR PART-TIME WORKERS
AS PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS WITH JOBS BY SEX, CANADA
SELECTED QUARTERLY DATES, 1955 - 1959



Women as Part-Time and Part-Year Workers

Both part-time and part-year workers more common in female labour force than among male working population. As women's labour force participation grows, number of workers who do not devote full time to the job will likely increase

Neither the number of women with jobs nor the participation rate of women* gives a measure of the share of the nation's work, in man-hours, weeks or months, that is contributed by women. And the labour force participation rate does not reflect the extent to which the working population is made up of part-time and occasional workers; anyone who does even one hour's work during the survey week is counted in the labour force, and given the same weight in the participation rate as a full-time worker.

(The Dominion Bureau of Statistics monthly bulletin on the labour force survey regularly warns that "while variations in the estimates of the total number of persons with jobs provide a valuable indicator of economic conditions, significant changes in the employment pattern may be concealed unless attention is focussed on the extent to which these people worked less than full time, or were not at work.")

In assessing the contribution of women to the nation's work, it becomes important, as the number of employed women grows, to investigate the effect of the difference in the pattern of women's work from that of men's. A change is taking place in the sex composition of the working population; there may also be a change in the individual contribution to work made by the female members. Since a woman's work-pattern is greatly influenced by obligations that fall on her when she marries, it is likely that the total contribution of women workers would be affected by the increase in recent years in the proportion married.

It is important, too, to ascertain whether the proportion of working women who spend virtually their whole lives in the labour force—a minority of all women—is increasing or decreasing. If the number of labour force members who do not have full-time, year-round jobs is increasing at a faster rate than the number of those who do, the implications may be important.

Women with family responsibilities do not generally commit themselves to full-time, year-round employment. Yet they may arrange to work outside the home for

a few hours a day, perhaps while children are at school, or on certain days of the week. Or they may take on full-time jobs now and then in a seasonal rush, permitting their usual home duties to pile up until they are free again.

Although the two patterns of work are not always mutually exclusive, it is generally true that when women take jobs that do not commit them 100 per cent to the labour force they are either (a) part-time workers in that they work less than the regular weekly hours, or (b) part-year workers. The important factor that distinguishes both categories from regular labour force members (male or female) is that their primary attachment is to duties outside the labour force.

From the labour force survey data it is possible to measure with some degree of accuracy the extent of part-time work. But how many labour force members work only part of the year, and the characteristics of these part-year workers are much more difficult to establish. In this article, attention will be directed first to the identifiable group of part-time workers, and then an attempt will be made to estimate the extent of part-year work.

Part-Time Work

Although it is technically possible to use part-time workers in many factories, industry generally "wants a full working day of seven or eight hours... so that machines can be kept running and the hours fit in with the general organization of the establishment, supervision, transportation arrangements and so on".¹ In North America, industry has made relatively little use of part-time workers except in times of labour shortage. Employers naturally want to avoid disruption of the routine of the plant that is likely to result from introducing part-time work beyond what is necessary to meet unforeseen circumstances that are bound to arise from time to time.

When a plant shuts down because of lack of orders or of raw material, or when illness or the weather prevents workers from putting in full time on the job, the result is what is usually called short-time work or

*Percentage of the civilian female population 14 years of age and over in the labour force, i.e., with jobs or without jobs and seeking work.

¹ Dame Mary Smieten: "Problems of Women's Employment in Great Britain," *International Labour Review*, Vol. LXIX, No. 1, Jan. 1954, p. 51.

involuntary part-time work, and it mainly affects men.

But in addition to those who work part time now and then by reason of circumstances beyond their control, many are on a regular schedule of part-time work year in and year out. This arrangement may be due to requirements of the employer whose establishment experiences regular rush periods as well as lulls, or it may be a special plan to enable the worker to fulfil other obligations. In some kinds of establishments such as retail stores and restaurants, the needs of the employer fortunately coincide with the hours that many part-time workers can afford to give to paid work. Women whose commitments to home responsibilities preclude them from giving full time to an outside job make up the majority of regular part-time workers. This class of part-time workers, which in the last five years has been growing in Canada at a much faster rate than the regular full-time working force, can be said to dilute the labour force.

Recognizing that part-time work is among the important issues concerning women workers today, the International Labour Organization has called on experts from many countries to consider part-time work among other questions affecting working women. Already it is clear that opinions are divided as to the probable effects of any large-scale growth in this segment of the labour force.

Women's organizations have expressed fears that part-time employment may "lead to the creation of a special body of women workers of a lower type constituting a threat to the application of the principle of equal pay and to the status of the female labour force as a whole".² Others have raised objections on economic grounds. It has been suggested that if part-time work were to become available on a large scale some women would switch from full-time to part-time work, causing a drop in the overall contribution of women to the working force. Whether or not this would happen is a matter of conjecture. It is certain, however, that the part-time job fills a real need for many. It enables women to add to the family income without neglecting essential duties of the home; at the same time it provides employers with extra help at peak periods.

The meeting of Experts on Women's Employment called by the ILO in 1956 agreed to limit the definition of part-time

work for the purposes of their discussions to regular work carried on for substantially less than normal hours of work by mutual agreement between the employer and the worker. Involuntary short-time work in periods of economic recession, and seasonal and casual work were excluded.

The Canadian Labour Force Survey conducted monthly by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics classes all who work less than 35 hours in the survey week as less than full-time workers. Data are provided separately for those who regularly work part time. These regular part-time workers correspond roughly to the group with which the ILO meeting of Experts on Women's Employment is concerned.

In recent years both the number and proportion of Canadian workers on a regular schedule of part-time work have been growing. This trend is particularly noticeable in the case of women (Table 1).

Despite the fact that the number of part-time jobs has been on the increase, there is "great demand for part-time employment on the women's side...in most of the economically more developed countries".³ Because married women still make up a high proportion of the non-working population the situation is likely to continue. These women are, generally speaking, not looking for full-time jobs, but if suitable part-time jobs were offered many would be ready to accept them.

Unless a very tight employment situation develops there is little hope of heavy demand for part-time workers in factories, although in time of national emergency they could become indispensable. But the growing distributive and service industries will probably continue to offer more part-time employment. It would be hard to imagine retail stores today without the women who help the full-time staff at rush hours and replace them on their days off, or offices without the men and women to clean up after regular workers go home. Considerable success has been achieved in placement of part-time workers in retail stores, restaurants, beauty parlors and laundries. With few full-time domestic workers available nowadays, a great many families rely on part-time household help. In professions in which there is a perennial shortage of help, such as nursing, social work and teaching, it is generally possible to solve the administrative problems, and considerable use is made of part-time workers.

Regular part-time work for women appears to be an established pattern in North America in establishments where it is either a solution to the employer's prob-

² "Part-time Employment for Women", *International Labour Review*, Vol. LXXV, No. 6, June 1957, p. 551.

³ "Part-time Employment for Women", p. 545.

TABLE 1—REGULAR PART-TIME WORKERS

Number and Percentage of all with jobs by sex, four specified months, 1952-1959

(Labour Force Survey estimates in thousands)

	Number		Percentage of All With Jobs	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1952 November.....	98	154	2.4	13.1
1953 February.....	83	118	2.1	10.6
May.....	75	142	1.8	12.1
August.....	63	117	1.5	9.7
November.....	78	124	1.9	10.4
1954 February.....	80	122	2.1	10.4
May.....	86	143	2.1	12.1
August.....	64	125	1.5	10.2
November.....	74	139	1.8	11.5
1955 February.....	94	144	2.4	12.3
May.....	82	151	2.0	12.3
August.....	68	132	1.5	10.2
November.....	82	158	2.0	12.3
1956 February.....	81	150	2.0	12.0
May.....	92	182	2.2	14.0
August.....	62	160	1.4	11.8
November.....	84	175	1.9	12.7
1957 February.....	93	163	2.3	12.3
May.....	97	199	2.2	14.2
August.....	80	163	1.7	11.5
November.....	123	229	2.8	15.8
1958 February.....	123	213	3.1	15.5
May.....	149	249	3.4	17.4
August.....	93	208	2.0	14.1
November.....	120	236	2.8	16.0
1959 February.....	122	235	3.0	16.1
May.....	131	255	3.0	17.1
August.....	103	216	2.2	14.0
November.....	146	261	3.3	16.9

SOURCE: *Labour Force Survey* monthly bulletins, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

lem or a means of using help available only part of the time by re-scheduling some of the work. The U.S. Department of Labor reports that: "The recent increases in labor force participation rates of married women have undoubtedly been partially due to expanding part-time job opportunities in suburban stores and service establishments." They add that: "If sufficient additional part-time jobs are not available, there may not be as much continued increase as projected

in the labour force participation rates for this group."⁴

Part-Year Workers

The monthly labour force survey is based on labour force activity during the survey week. It does not, of course, show what proportion of the workers are employed for less than a full year. The only authoritative

⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, *Population and Labor Force Projections for the United States, 1960 to 1975*, Bulletin No. 1242, p. 50.

TABLE 2—NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF WAGE-EARNERS IN CANADA* 14 AND OVER EMPLOYED LESS THAN 10 WEEKS AND LESS THAN 20 WEEKS IN YEARS ENDING JUNE 1, 1951 AND 1941, BY SEX

Weeks of Employment	1951		1941	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Less than 10.....	No. 103,534	60,556	126,342	56,481
	% 3.4	5.6	6.0	8.1
Less than 20†.....	No. 198,382	111,275	244,785	103,018
	% 6.6	10.4	11.6	14.7

* Not including Yukon and Northwest Territories. 1951 includes Newfoundland.

† Includes those employed less than 10 weeks.

SOURCE: 1951 *Census*, Vol. 5, Table 14.

PERSONS WHO WORKED LESS THAN 10 WEEKS IN YEAR ENDING JUNE 1, 1951
AS PERCENTAGE OF WAGE-EARNERS, CANADA
BY INDUSTRY AND SEX

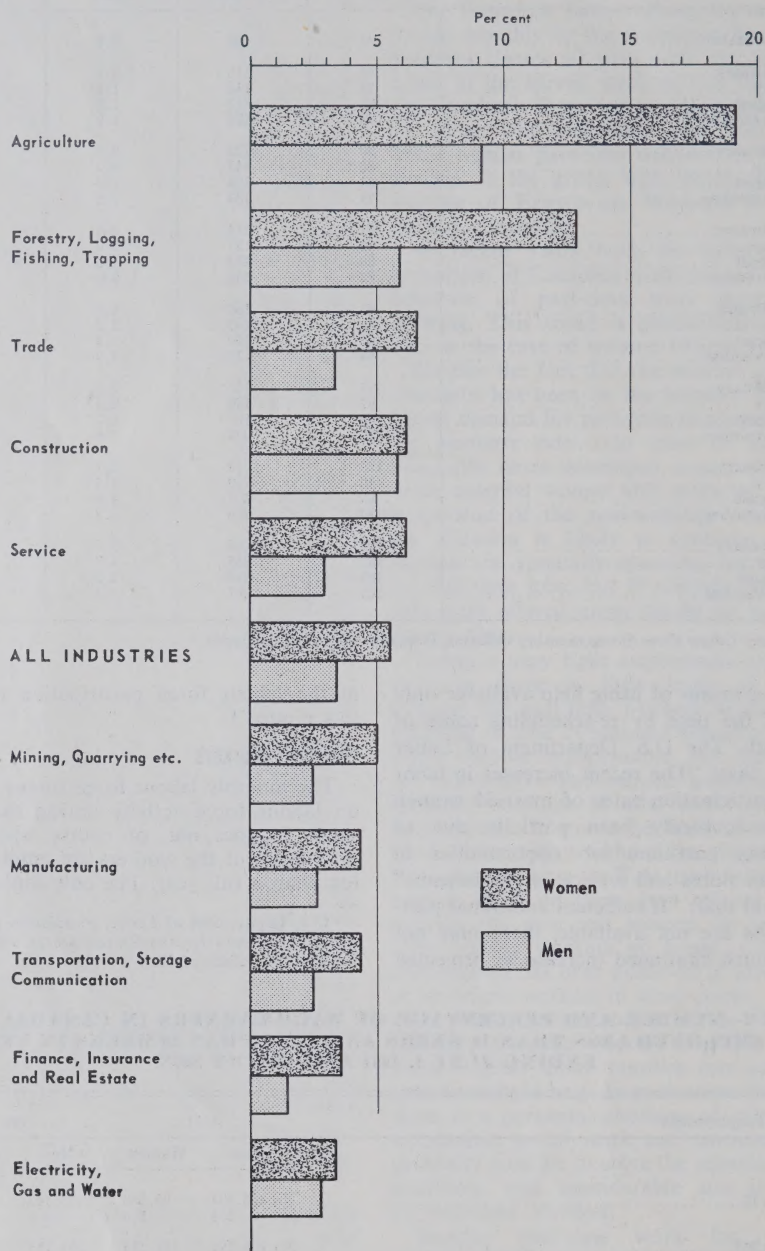


TABLE 3—PERCENTAGE OF WAGE-EARNERS IN CANADA* WHO WORKED LESS THAN 10 WEEKS IN YEARS ENDING JUNE 1, 1951 AND 1941, BY INDUSTRY AND SEX

Industry	Men		Women	
	1951	1941	1951	1941
	%	%	%	%
Agriculture.....	9.1	9.0	19.2	18.0
Forestry and Logging.....	5.8	6.0	12.7	12.9
Fishing and Trapping.....	8.6		13.8	
Mining, Quarrying, etc.....	2.6	4.8	5.0	7.1
Manufacturing.....	2.7	5.1	4.4	8.1
Electricity, Gas and Water.....	2.8	2.9	3.3	3.5
Construction.....	5.9	11.0	6.2	8.4
Transportation, etc.....	2.5	4.4	4.4	5.6
Trade.....	3.3	5.2	6.6	7.8
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate.....	1.4	3.0	3.7	6.1
Service.....	3.0	4.5	6.2	8.3
All Industries.....	3.4	6.0	5.6	8.1

* Not including Yukon and Northwest Territories.

SOURCE: 1951 Census, Vol. 5, Table 24.

source of information concerning that group of workers is the Census.

The last census of the Canadian labour force was conducted in 1951. It shows the number of weeks worked during the year by wage-earners of each sex, but there is nothing to indicate whether the weeks away from work were voluntary or involuntary.

It seems reasonable to assume, however, that few regular workers would choose to work less than 10 weeks in the year. Table 2 shows that although more men than women were employed for less than 10 weeks⁵ in the year (the bulk of them probably occupied most of the year as students or keeping house), this category of workers represents a higher proportion of all female wage-earners than of male wage-earners. This was true both in 1941 and 1951.⁶

No data are available to permit an investigation of the trend in this respect from 1951 to the present time, but comparison with 1941 census information shows that the absolute number of men working less than 10 weeks of the year (and also less than 20 weeks) fell in the decade preceding

1951, whereas the number of women working less than 10 weeks and also less than 20 weeks increased. Yet the forties saw such a great expansion in the total number of wage-earners, male and female, that for both sexes the percentage of all wage-earners who worked less than 10 weeks and less than 20 weeks fell.

The Census also throws light on which industries had the highest proportion of men and women who were employed for less than 10 weeks in 1951 and in 1941. Generally speaking, for both sexes it is mainly agriculture and other industries employing outdoor workers (Table 3). Since these industries are at their peak in the summer months, many of those who worked less than 10 weeks in the year would no doubt be winter-time students.

Among women there is a relatively high percentage of part-year workers in the service industry, in manufacturing, and in trade—particularly retail trade. The service and trade industries are large-scale employers of women, especially of married women.

The proportion of women who work less than 10 weeks of the year is high in the manufacture of foods and beverages. This is related to seasonal canning of fish, fruits and vegetables.

Because the data concerning part-year workers do not cover the same period as the information on part-time workers, the trends cannot be compared. It is known, however, that between the 1941 Census and the Census of 1951 the percentage of wage-earners who had worked less than 10 weeks of the year ended June 1 fell, for both men and women. Whether or not part-time work was on the increase during this period is not known. But it has been shown that during the last six or seven

⁵ For comparative purposes data are also given for wage-earners employed for less than 20 weeks in census year. The argument is unchanged.

⁶ Of course some who worked only a few weeks in the year would be beginning workers and others retiring, but this should not affect the comparison between 1941 and 1951. A study made by the Economics and Research Branch in 1949 concluded that roughly 13.5 per cent of the female labour force and 9.6 per cent of the male labour force were employed for only part of the year. The big difference was that of these part-year workers 97 per cent of the females but only half of the males were "not available for employment during the remainder of the year". The great majority of these male part-year workers would be students, whereas housewives would make up a high proportion of the females. "Seasonality of Employment in Canada," *Labour Gazette*, 1949, p. 1210.

years there has been a decided growth in regular part-time workers as a proportion of all persons with jobs.

Both part-time and occasional workers are more common in the female labour force than among the male working population. If women workers—particularly married women workers—make up an increasing

proportion of the labour force, the number of working people who do not devote full time to the job the year round will probably continue to grow.

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